



De Lery's Map of the Ohio River, 1740 (Eastern section). The most important result of the Longueuil expedition.

THE EXPEDITION OF THE BARON DE LONGUEUIL

DURING the eighteenth century there were many expeditions in various parts of North America, with a wide variety of purposes—path-finding, discovery, geographic mapping, or with military objectives. One military expedition of special interest to Pennsylvanians was the expedition of the Baron de Longueuil in 1739, the first to pass through western Pennsylvania. This is notable for its successful journey over sixteen hundred miles of lake, trail, and river from Montreal, Canada, to the vicinity of Memphis, Tennessee. It followed its pre-arranged route without detour, though travelling through unmapped country, to complete one of the longest military movements ever carried out in North America.

This expedition was the first large military force to use the Chautauqua-Allegheny-Ohio

route, and hence the first to pass through western Pennsylvania. Indian traders and agents of the British and the French had entered the region before, but this was the first large-scale expedition. Ten years before Celoron's expedition, and fourteen years before Marin built the first French forts in western Pennsylvania, the Baron de Longueuil used the waterways of this region to reach the lower Mississippi valley.

The expedition of the Baron de Longueuil was part of an extensive operation known as the Chickasaw campaign. The Chickasaw Indians in northern Mississippi had long been hostile to the French, and were a menace to communication between Canada and Louisiana, because of their geographical position. Their war parties frequently attacked convoys of traders and soldiers travelling on the Mississippi, and even

threatened the outlying settlements of Louisiana. For a decade, attempts were made to pacify or subdue this hostile tribe, with little success. Now, in the year 1739, an elaborate campaign was planned.

Troops brought from France were to advance northward from New Orleans, while other detachments would come from Canada to join them. From Michilimackinac, a force of French and Indians would descend the Mississippi by way of the Chicago portage. On the way, a party from Fort Chartres in the Illinois country would meet them. From the heart of French Canada, another force under the Baron de Longueuil would travel by way of Chautauqua Lake, to join the other groups at the rendezvous, Fort Assumption on the Mississippi River, near present Memphis.

The Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor of Canada since 1726, had arranged this concerted plan of campaign with M. de Bienville, the Governor of Louisiana. It was doubtless that the greatest possible cooperation that the Canadian Governor appointed the Baron de Longueuil, a nephew of Bienville, to command the expedition from Montreal.

Charles Le Moyne, the second Baron de Longueuil, was a member of an empire-building family. His father, the first Baron, campaigned with La Barre and Denonville, and died Lieutenant Governor of Montreal in 1729. His father's brothers, Iberville, Saint Helene, Serigny, Maricourt, Bienville, and Chateauguay, were also notable in history, none more so than Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, the great Governor of Louisiana. The second Baron de Longueuil was born in 1687, and was therefore fifty-two years old at the time of the expedition.

Longueuil's detachment had a total strength of 442 men, which included French officers and soldiers, Canadian *habitants* and canoe paddlers, and an Indian contingent. The roll in the Public Archives of Canada names many individuals who later played important roles in the striking events of the Ohio region's later history. Legardeur de Saint Pierre was to become a famous explorer of the Far West, and to com-

mand at Fort Le Boeuf in 1753, when Washington brought a summons there from the Governor of Virginia. Three other commanders of the French forts in western Pennsylvania are also represented: Portneuf, Benoist, and Ligneris. Ligneris was the commander who destroyed and abandoned Fort Duquesne in 1758 on the approach of Forbes' army, and who tried fruitlessly to relieve the beleaguered Fort Niagara in 1759. The Chevalier de Villiers, another on the roster, forced Washington to surrender Fort Necessity in 1754. Two of the Joncaires also appear on the roll, and one of them accompanied Celoron in 1749. Legardeur de Repentigny was one of Marin's officers in 1753. The roster is, in a sense, a cast of characters for the events of the next twenty years.

Of all the names on the roster, the name of an eighteen-year-old boy is especially worthy of notice. Joseph Gaspard Chaussegros de Lery, son of the chief engineer of New France, made the survey and reckonings for the map which was the most important outcome of the expedition. He was commissioned assistant engineer on January 1, 1739. His father wrote to the ministry in Paris that, when his son "found that a detachment was to leave this country, he was the first to go and ask to be included. The general asked him if he had spoken to me; he told him that, judging from my sentiments, I should be very glad for him to make this campaign." With the father's approval, young De Lery was assigned "to serve as engineer and as junior major during the journey."

The force was gathered and equipped at Montreal in the last week of May and the first two weeks of June, 1739. Father Lauzon, head of the Jesuit mission, helped effectively by persuading the Sault St. Louis Indians to join the expedition. Most reluctant were the forty-five *habitants*, Canadian provincials, for "it was necessary to use authority to make them march." The expedition set off up the St. Lawrence River between the 16th and 30th of June. In bateaux and canoes they followed the south shore of Lake Ontario, which brought them so near to Fort Oswego that they lost some Indians to the lure of English whiskey. Making the portage at Niagara, they reached Lake Erie by August 4,

and proceeded by water to the mouth of Chautauqua Creek, below present-day Westfield, New York.

Here they made the portage to Lake Chautauqua. Possibly two routes or trails were used, for two portage trails are shown on the De Lery map, one slightly to the east of the one used by the French at a later time. In 1754, Chaussegros de Lery came to Lake Chautauqua again, and showed in a sketch in his journal the spot where the expedition had camped at the head of the lake.

Another portage probably had to be made past the shallows of the Chautauqua outlet, before they reached the Conewango (Kanavangon) Creek. At the present site of Warren, they entered the Allegheny, which to them was the Belle Riviere or Ohio River. Probably a halt was made at Paille Coupee or Brokenstraw, the Indian village near present Irvine, a convenient spot for a council to enlist Indian support. From Celoron's journal of 1749, it is known that they halted at Chiningue or Logstown, below present-day Pittsburgh, and again at the Scioto River, where the Shawnee Indians gave them a friendly reception and furnished reinforcements. Big Bone Lick, on the south bank of the Ohio, in the present state of Kentucky, was the next point visited. The 1740 map of De Lery and Mandeville bears the following note at this place:

Endroit ou yl a Ette trouve Les Eaux de plusieurs Elephans pard L armee de Cannada
Commande pard Mr. Le Baron de Longuille
et ou il a fait mettre Les Armes du Roy en 1739

[Place where the bones of many elephants were found by the army from Canada commanded by the Baron de Longueuil, and where he had the Arms of the King set up in 1739]

This is the earliest surviving record of an official taking possession of the Ohio River, in the form made familiar by Celoron in 1749. It may also be the first mention of the valuable relics of prehistoric times to be found at this spot.

The expedition reached Fort Assumption successfully, but its military results were of no

great consequence. The French had no striking successes. The Indians were overawed by the presence of the large forces just as long as they were in the region, and no longer. The outstanding achievement of the campaign was in the field of geography. It produced the first reasonably accurate map of the Ohio River.

The title of the 1740 map may be freely translated as follows:

Detailed Map of a part of the Beautiful River and of the Route taken by the Canadian Detachment from Niagara Falls to the River St. Louis (the Mississippi). Surveyed by compass and dead reckoning by Sieur de Lery, the younger; and drawn by Sieur de Mandeville in 1740.

As indicated by the title, this map was based on a compass survey. Directions were determined by the compass, but distances were estimated by the time required to journey from one point to another. Some information was doubtless obtained from the Indians and from French traders and agents who had been in the valley as early as 1724. From these De Lery may have learned details about the upper courses of streams and about other natural features, which the expedition did not visit. He may also have had some information from his father. The elder Chaussegros de Lery had come to the mouth of the Niagara River in 1726 to build Fort Niagara. While there, he sought geographical information about the surrounding territory, and prepared some maps, notably a map of Lake Ontario which still survives. It is very likely that he also had sketches or information about the Ohio region, of which his son made use.

Lake Le Boeuf, Le Boeuf Creek, French Creek, and the junction of French Creek with Le Boeuf, are shown unmistakably on this map for the first time. This portion of the map is so definite that De Lery must either have explored the region, or had very precise descriptions from others. It is an odd fact that the first natural features of northwestern Pennsylvania to appear on maps were the interior waterways, and not the bay and peninsula of Presque Isle. The 1740

map shows Lake Chautauqua (Hiatackoun), the Chautauqua portages, Conewango Creek (Kanavangon), the village of Brokenstraw (Gachinantiagon), and two villages on French Creek. Its notice of Big Bone Lick has been mentioned. Most important of all, it was the first map to give a reasonably adequate representation of the Ohio River. It shows the bends of the river, while earlier maps show it as a straight line.

Later cartographers were debtors to De Lery for information about the Ohio Valley. The expedition of 1739 thus belongs more to the young engineer Chaussegros de Lery than to the soldier Baron de Longueuil, for De Lery made it memorable. The geographic information which he recorded provided the foundation for the later complete cartographic knowledge of the Ohio valley.

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